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TO:
Michael
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Bill

1060 BROAD STREET

PARAPHRASING FDR: THE POOR ARE THE FORGOTTEN PEOPLE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE ECONOMIC PYRAMID. THIS WAS IN THE 1930'S

IT IS NO SECRET THAT THINGS ARE NOT MUCH BETTER IN 2003. THE GOVERNMENT HAS FAILED MISERABLY. UNTIL GOVERNMENT SETS UP MEANINGFUL PROGRAMS OF ASSISTANCE, MOST PEOPLE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ESCAPE POVERTY.

THE USURPING OF VALUABLE HOUSING STOCK THAT ALLOWED POLITICIANS AND THE GOVERNMENT TO DECLARE IMMINENT DOMAIN, DESTROYED MANY OF NEWARK'S COMMUNITIES. PROGRAMS LIKE THE COLLEGE OF MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY DISPLACED THOUSANDS OF NEWARK RESIDENTS.

WHERE WERE THESE PEOPLE SUPPOSED TO RELOCATE?

1060 BROAD STREET, THE DEFUNCT ESSEX HOUSE, IN THE ONCE EXCLUSIVE LINCOLN PARK DISTRICT WAS ONE OF THE OPTIONS. 1060 WAS TO BE RENOVATED IN AN AREA WHICH HAD DETERIORATED INTO A VERY UNDESIRABLE, DRUG INFESTED, NEIGHBORHOOD.

THERE ARE 454 APARTMENTS WHICH CAN ACCOMMODATE ABOUT 800 TENANTS. HOWEVER THIS HIGH COMPLEX WAS DESIGNATED AS A SENIOR CITIZEN RESIDENCE.

WAREHOUSING AFRICAN AMERICAN SENIORS WAS CATASTROPHIC TO THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY. SENIORS ARE THE MOST STABILIZING FACTOR IN ANY COMMUNITY.

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BUT THE SENIORS WERE SO GRATEFUL TO HAVE NEW APARTMENTS, THEY DID NOT CONSIDER THE TERRIBLE RAMIFICANTS OF THIS RELOCATION.

TODAY, THESE SENIORS ARE VIRTUALLY PRISONERS IN THIS GOVERNMENT RUN HOUSING.

UNSCRUPULESS LANDLORDS DO NOT PROVIDE THE NECESSARY CARE THAT THESE NOW VERY ELDERLY TENANTS REQUIRE.

WHEN THE GOVERNMENT LOWERED THE AMOUNT OF RENT THAT LANDLORDS COULD COLLECT, DO YOU KNOW THAT SOME MANAGERS ORGANIZED SO CALLED SOCIAL CLUBS AND MADE THE TENANTS PAY FOR THEIR SOCIAL FUNCTIONS BY COLLECTING DUES.

SINCE THEN, THE COMMUNITY ROOM HAS BEEN RENTED OUT AND ONLY MEDICAID TENANTS CAN USE THE FACILITIES. IF MEDICARE TENANTS WANT TO USE THE FACILITIES THEY HAVE TO PAY A FEE TO HAVE A SOCIAL FUNCTION AND \$12.00 A DAY FOR TWO MEALS IF A SENIOR WANTS TO USE THE DAY SERVICES OF THE COMMUNITY ROOM.

TODAY THERE ARE NO SOCIAL SERVICES TO ASSIST THE TENANTS WITH THEIR NEEDS. THE DOCTORS WILL TAKE ALL TENANTS, BUT THE TENANT HAS TO BE ABLE TO GET TO THE OFFICE. MANY TENANTS HAVE DIED IN THEIR APARTMENT DUE TO LACK OF AVAILABLE SERVICES.

THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD) AND THE NEW JERSEY MORTGAGE HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY (NJMHFA) HAVE OUT-SOURCED THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MANAGING THESE SUBSIDIZED RESIDENCES TO CONTRACTORS. NOW, CONTRACTORS ARE REPSONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING STANDARDS AND

ENFORCING RULES THAT HUD AND NJMHFA HAD
WRITTEN INTO LAW.

WHAT IS NEEDED NOW, IS THAT THESE GOVERNMENT
AGENCIES' EXPENDITURES AS WELL AS SITE
MANAGERS' FINANCIAL LEDGERS ARE EXAMINED
AND POLICIES INVESTIGATED BY AN INDEPENDENT
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE. THEN A MANDATE MUST
BE GIVEN TO GOVERNMENT AND SITE MANAGERS
THAT ALL HOUSING LAWS MUST BE OBEYED,
SERVICES RESTORED AND RESTITUTION OF MONIES
SPENT ILLEGALLY IS USED TO ALLEVIATE UNSAFE
LIVING CONDITIONS.

THE AIM SHOULD BE TO SEE THAT ALL CONDITIONS
OF ABJECT POVERTY BE ELIMINATED FROM
GOVERNMENT FINANCED RESIDENCES.

THE MONIES ARE THERE, THE BUDGET IS HUGE. THE
WAY IT IS USED IS THE PROBLEM.

THEREFORE, WE NEED TO MANDATE THAT
GOVERNMENT SHOULD MAKE ALLOCATIONS TO
UPGRADE SENIOR HOUSING AND PROVIDE
AFFORDABLE LOW-INCOME HOUSING SO THAT THE
NEEDS OF SENIORS AND RESIDENTS WILL BE MET.

WE HAVE TO BE PRO-ACTIVE NOW! THE FUTURE
DEVELOPMENT OF THIS TOWN NEEDS TO BE
RESHAPED. WE MUST USE OUR VOTE TO ELECT
POLITICIANS WHO WILL REPRESENT THE INTEREST
OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF THIS CITY. NOT THE JUST THE
FEW.

Speech given by Lorraine Lavender
11/13/03 at an Essex County Community Forum
Chaired by The Anti-Poverty Network